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ABSTRACT

This report examines the health and wellbeing of children in the United States' largest cities, covering every city with a population of 100,000 or more, as well as the largest cities in states without any cities of this size. Research shows that many cities are becoming more child-friendly, with better access to good education, jobs, and health care. In addition to explanations and analysis of these data, there are several articles exploring urban living and children's quality of life. The 12 chapters are: "Foreword" (Congressman David Wu); "Talking Points: Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card" (Peter H. Kostmayer); "Introduction: 2001 Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card" (Radhika Sarin); "The Real Test: Life in the Majors" (Bruce Adams); "Healthy Cities and Healthy Parks: We Can Have Both!" (Peter Harnik); "A Comeback City--For Kids" (Neal R. Peirce); "Indicators and Data: Definitions, Sources, and Rationales"; "Centerfold: Pull-out Wall Chart"; "Major Cities: Final Rankings and the Honor Roll"; "Independent Cities: Final Rankings and the Honor Roll"; "Component Cities: Final Rankings and the Honor Roll"; "Kid-Friendly Cities Benefit the Planet, Too" (Molly O'Meara Sheehan); and "Methodology and Statistical Analysis: How We Assigned Grades and Ranks" (Radhika Sarin). (SM)

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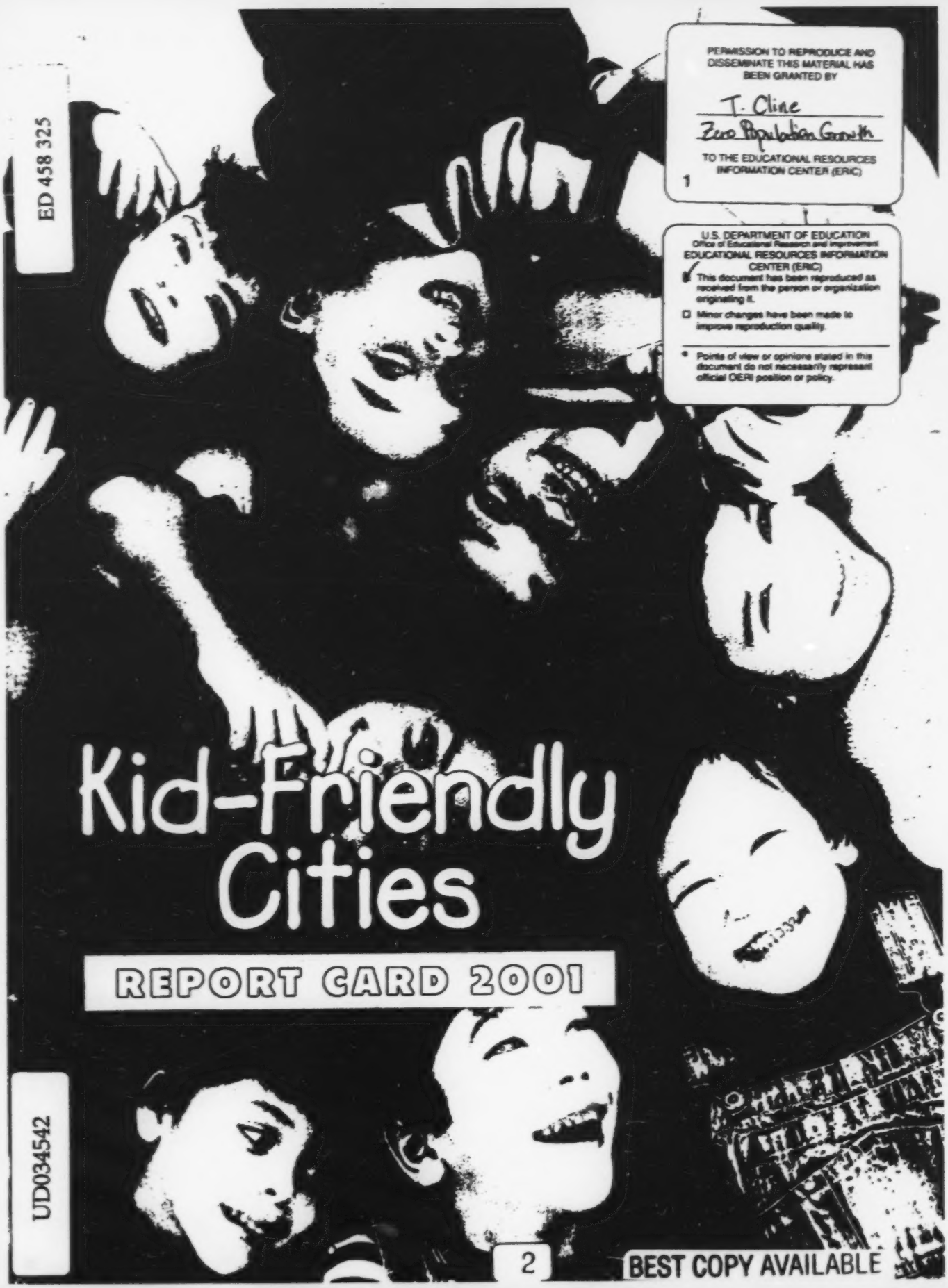

Kid-Friendly Cities

REPORT CARD 2001

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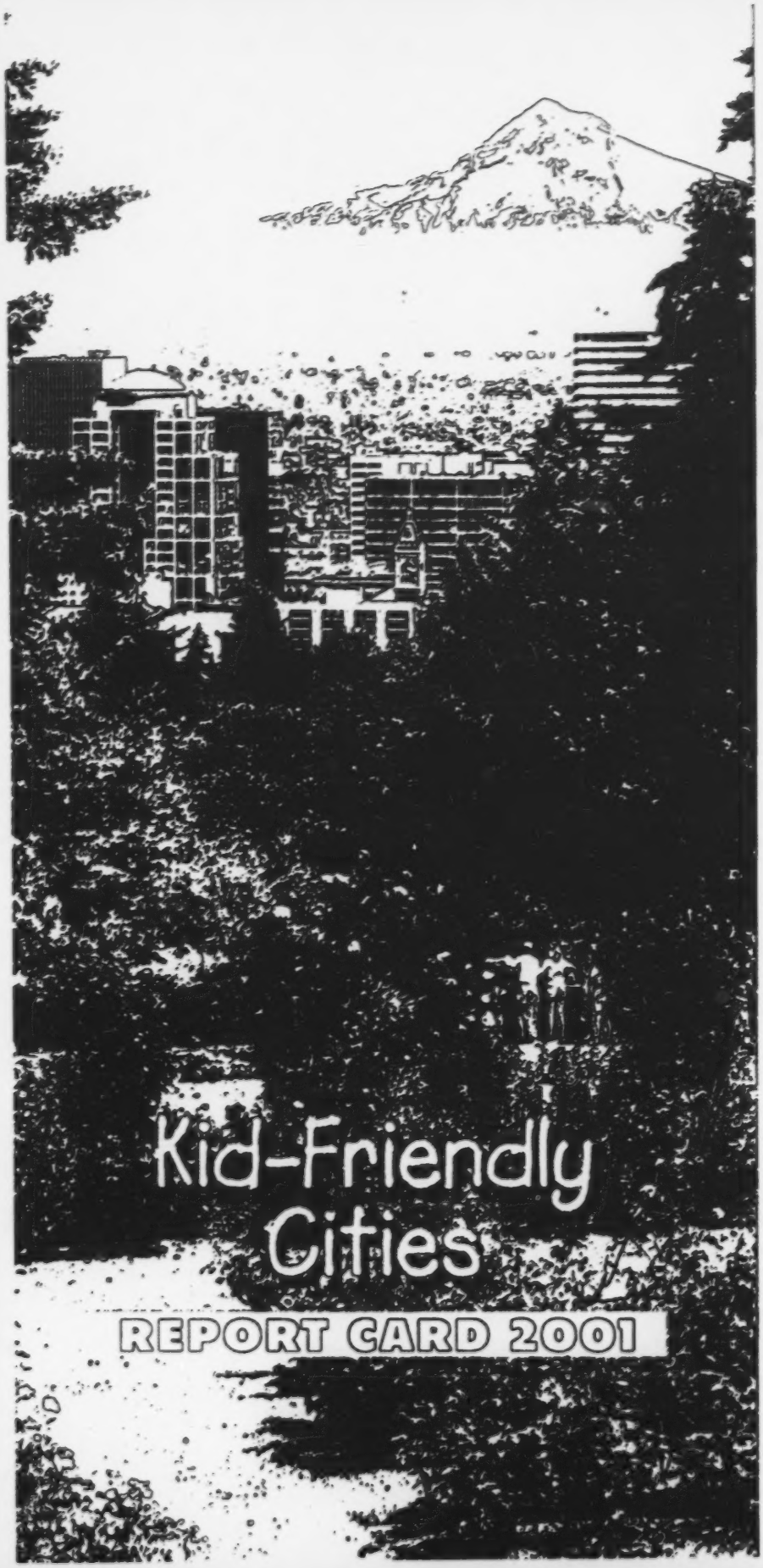

This special edition of the *ZPG Reporter* contains the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card.* In addition to explanations and analysis of the data, there are several articles exploring urban living and children's quality of life. Here we have contributions from some notable writers who discuss the importance of the *Report*, including Congressman David Wu, urban parks expert Peter Harnik, urban activist Bruce Adams, and Worldwatch Institute researcher Molly O'Meara Sheehan. We hope these articles will provide you with a broader picture of urban issues and how they relate to quality of life issues.

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Photo of Portland, Oregon: © Mr. Janis Miglavs

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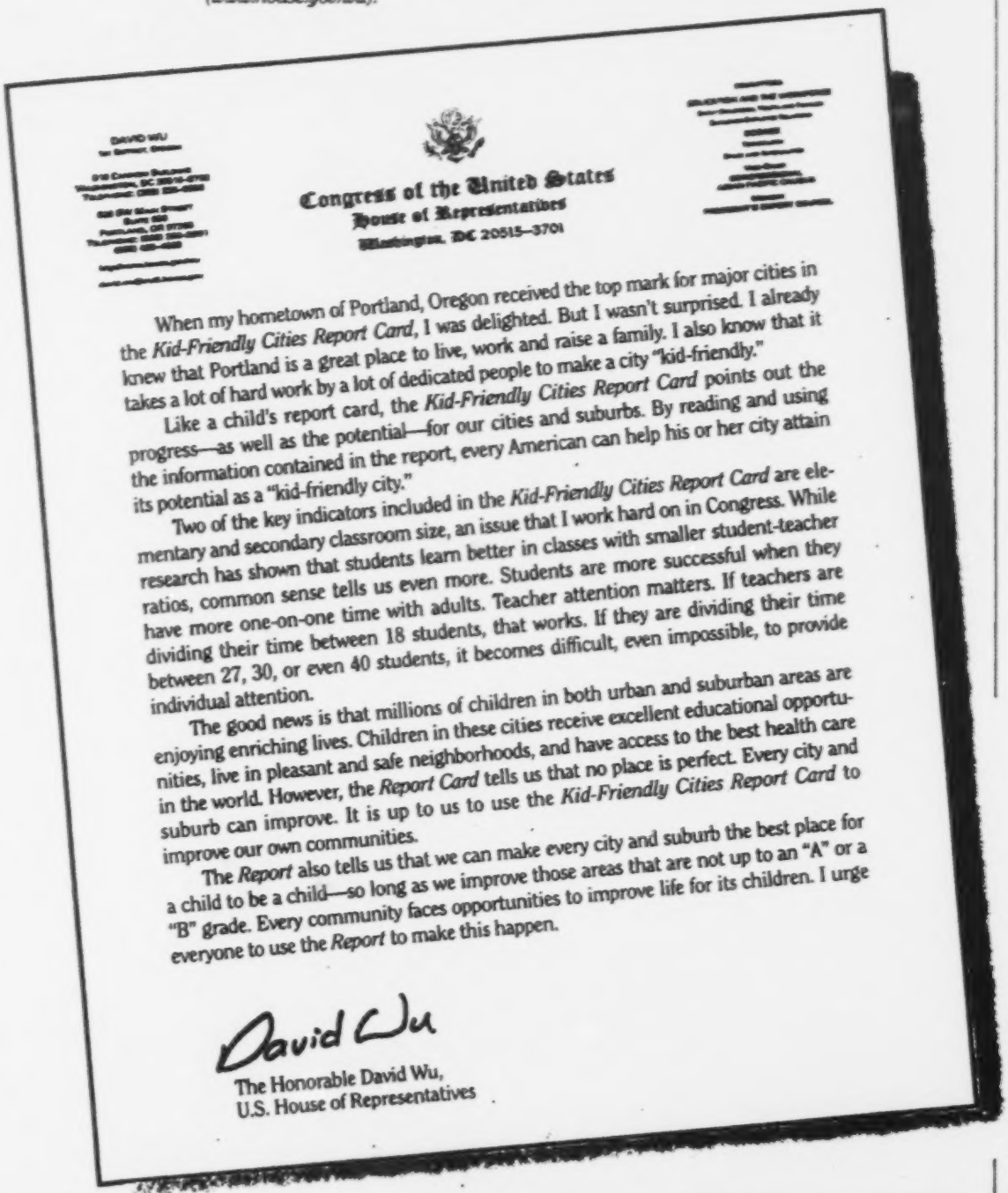
Congressman David Wu (D-Oregon) is serving his 2nd term in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Congressman, who was born in Taiwan and came to the U.S. with his family in 1961, earned a Bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a law degree from Yale University. The only Chinese-American serving in the House, Congressman Wu sits on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Science Committee (www.house.gov/wu).



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When my hometown of Portland, Oregon received the top mark for major cities in the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*, I was delighted. But I wasn't surprised. I already knew that Portland is a great place to live, work and raise a family. I also know that it takes a lot of hard work by a lot of dedicated people to make a city "kid-friendly."

Like a child's report card, the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* points out the progress—as well as the potential—for our cities and suburbs. By reading and using the information contained in the report, every American can help his or her city attain its potential as a "kid-friendly city."

Two of the key indicators included in the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* are elementary and secondary classroom size, an issue that I work hard on in Congress. While research has shown that students learn better in classes with smaller student-teacher ratios, common sense tells us even more. Students are more successful when they have more one-on-one time with adults. Teacher attention matters. If teachers are dividing their time between 18 students, that works. If they are dividing their time between 27, 30, or even 40 students, it becomes difficult, even impossible, to provide individual attention.

The good news is that millions of children in both urban and suburban areas are enjoying enriching lives. Children in these cities receive excellent educational opportunities, live in pleasant and safe neighborhoods, and have access to the best health care in the world. However, the *Report Card* tells us that no place is perfect. Every city and suburb can improve. It is up to us to use the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* to improve our own communities.

The *Report* also tells us that we can make every city and suburb the best place for a child to be a child—so long as we improve those areas that are not up to an "A" or a "B" grade. Every community faces opportunities to improve life for its children. I urge everyone to use the *Report* to make this happen.

David Wu

The Honorable David Wu,
U.S. House of Representatives

You can access the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* in detail on the web at www.kidfriendlycities.org. In addition to the data presented in *The Reporter*, the website contains 1990 Health data, which we used to determine the Health Improvement Grade of each city. You can also access the official website of each city through our site.

Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card 2001:

A Special Edition of *The ZPG Reporter*

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Zero Population Growth, Inc. is a national nonprofit membership organization working to slow population growth and achieve a sustainable balance between the Earth's people and its resources.

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Attention All Teachers!

Now you can use the data in ZPG's *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* to teach innovative classroom lessons, as presented in *Living a Quality Future*. This teaching companion provides creative ways to evaluate the data and conclusions, explore community sustainability, and spark classroom discussions on important issues.

Students will sharpen their skills in critical thinking, calculating, graphing, and analysis as they draw correlations between indicators in the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*. *Living a Quality Future* is an interdisciplinary plan and fits into high school social studies, mathematics, and science curricula.

The *Living a Quality Future* teaching unit includes one teacher guide and 30 copies of The *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*. It is available for $10.00 per set (plus $5.00 S&H, U.S. only). Please call or write to ZPG: ZPG Publications, 1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20036; email: info@zpg.org; 1-800-767-1956 (ask for publications).

ZPG's 2001* Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card *will be released at the Capital Children's Museum in Washington, DC. This exciting and kid-friendly museum is located just a few blocks from the Capitol Building near Union Station. Permanent and rotating exhibits encourage young visitors to explore a prehistoric cave, learn why gas is heavier than liquid, star in a cartoon in the Chuck Jones Animation Studio, drive a Metro bus, and much more. For more information visit them at www.ccm.org or call 202-675-4120.

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Talking Points

Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card

by Peter H. Kostmayer, President, Zero Population Growth

Why is ZPG doing this study?

For over 30 years, ZPG has been working to improve the quality of people's lives. The *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* focuses on some of our society's most vulnerable people: Kids. Tackling population growth-related problems—from overcrowded classrooms to teen pregnancy—will help to guarantee a bright and prosperous future for our children. In fact, population stabilization will deliver enormous quality of life improvements—from less sprawl to fewer traffic jams—for everyone.

The quality of everyone's lives can be improved by guaranteeing access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services, by educating and empowering women, by reducing unplanned and teenage pregnancies, and by doing all the things that we know work. ZPG wants every child to be a wanted child. And every child must have the food, shelter, health care, education, and protection from crime and abuse that he or she needs to develop into a healthy and happy adult.

This report serves to alert people to problems and successes in their cities. In fact, over the last decade, people all over America have taken on some of the biggest challenges noted here and in other studies. To see examples, read the back of the enclosed poster–it has some great kid-friendly projects.

What is ZPG's 2001 Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card?

- The 2001 *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*, the 8th of a bi-annual series, is a national 239-city study by Zero Population Growth (ZPG).
- The study looks at every city in America with a population of 100,000+. It presents a broad picture of conditions where our children play, learn, and grow. We hope it can help make American cities more kid-friendly.
- Each city's kid-friendliness is graded for the quality of Community Life; Economics; Education; Environment; Health; Population Change; and Public Safety.
- The report compares "apples" to "apples." We examined cities in three categories: 25 Major Cities (populations greater than 2 million), 140 smaller Independent Cities (populations of 100,000 to 2 million), and 74 Component Cities or suburbs (incorporated areas of more than 100,000 within the metropolitan statistical area).
- For more details, see : www.kidfriendlycities.org.

What are the study's main findings?

- Many cities are becoming more kid-friendly. Access to good education, good jobs and, in particular, good healthcare have had the biggest impact on the quality of children's lives.
- Portland, OR, Burlington, VT, and Overland Park, KS come out on top with A+ grades. The study gives its lowest C- grade to Atlanta, GA, San Bernardino, CA and Moreno Valley, CA.
- If you thought that New York was very different from Peoria, think again. Major cities and smaller Independent cities are becoming more alike. Both are facing the same challenges: violent crime, access to healthcare, and a decent education. And both share the same dramatic improvements: lower levels of teen births and infant mortality rates, and fewer low birth weight babies.

For more information on talking to the press and media about the Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card, email press@zpg.org. Our website also has more details on the report at www.kidfriendlycities.org.

Introduction to the 2001 Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card

Radhika Sarin,
Principal Researcher
Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card

Those of us concerned with population pressures and environmental degradation often talk about the importance of preserving resources and ensuring a decent quality of life for future generations. Forward thinking, we emphasize, should be used when tackling the mammoth social and environmental problems facing our world.

It is with this forward thinking that we present to you the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*.

Over and over again, we hear the phrase "our children are our future"—so often, in fact, that it could be filed away as yet another cliché. But at ZPG, we realize that how we treat our children shows much about how we treat our future. This *Report Card* offers a glimpse of the health and well-being of some 20 million children living in America's largest cities. The *Report Card* covers every city in the United States with a population of 100,000 or more, as well as the largest cities in those states without any cities of this size —239 cities in all.

Among other things, this study aims to stir discussion. How well are our children's needs being met? More importantly, what can be done to improve our record? The *Report Card* is ***not*** a relocation guide. Rather, it is a tool for change, providing information that concerned citizens can use to identify conditions that need improvement in their communities.

As in years past, the *Report Card* looks at many aspects of "kid-friendliness," including health conditions, safety, education, and environmental cleanliness. In the past, we received many comments about the importance of "intangibles." Is there a feeling of community in a city? Are the people friendly? How diverse is that city? What about culture? Intangibles, as one youngster said, reflect "how much fun I have!" While it is true that some things just cannot be measured, the new "Community Life" category in this year's *Report Card* includes new information on two very important aspects of children's lives: libraries and parks. Although this data was difficult to obtain (the only way we could find out about parks was by making, literally, hundreds of phone calls), we felt it was important for understanding children's lives outside of home and school.

The Health Improvement Grade is another new area we looked at. This category reflects the effort cities have made in reducing the percent of births to teens, infant mortality, and the percent of low weight births. Cities such as Washington, DC, Atlanta, and Detroit have made remarkable strides in improving health quality over the past eight years despite ranking low in the overall study. In fact, 18 of the 25 Major Cities have reduced the percent of births to teens, ranging from Miami's 1.2 percent decrease to San Francisco's 25.6 percent decrease.

The Problems of Limited Data

While the *Report Card* provides us with data in several key areas, there is much that we don't know, merely because it hasn't been documented. For nearly a decade now, we've been pointing out the lack of environmental monitoring under regulated standards and procedures. Water monitoring is one example. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires all public water systems to monitor water quality for coliform bacteria, contaminant levels, and water treatment chemical byproducts. Unfortunately, SDWA violations are self-reported, and not all cities monitor and report violations with equal frequency. It is difficult, therefore, to make accurate comparisons between cities' water quality because some cities either fail to examine

Photo: © Comstock Images

water quality or fail to report violations. Children are especially vulnerable to environmental contaminants since they eat, drink, and breathe more per body weight than adults; without crucial public health data, however, it is difficult to say how many children are at risk.

Our knowledge of what is happening in the education sector at the city-level is equally limited. Important indicators, such as the drop-out rate and the preprimary enrollment rate, are collected every ten years through the Census. Day by day, Census 2000 data is being released, but most city-level data will not be available until 2002—just in time for us to start working on our next *Report Card*! This year, ZPG's options were to use city-level data from a decade ago or state-level data from recent years. Think about how different your life was ten years ago, and you will understand why we chose to report state-level data. It is distressing to realize that current policies are being developed based on the situation ten years ago.

Those of you who were with us for the 1999 *Report Card* will also notice that a very important indicator—the percentage of children living in poverty—is missing from our study this time. Again, this indicator is only measured at the city-level every ten years, and we are anxiously awaiting Census 2000 data. At the national level, the poverty rate for children stood at 18 percent in 1998—a rate closer to that of 1980 rather than the early 1990s, when it reached a high of 22 percent in 1993.

Clearly, we have much work to do in the area of data collection and monitoring indicators pertaining to children's well-being. The list continues—access to child care, instances of abuse, the number of homeless children, and so on. Not only should this data be collected, it needs to be collected by *national* agencies—using consistent standards and methods. We need an accurate description of children all over the nation: Cindy in Sioux Falls, Bobby in Berkeley, and Peter in Jersey City.

We think that the *Report Card* is a good place to start, and we can certainly take action about what we *do* know. On the poster, we provide information about the median city in each group of cities, as well as the United States average for the indicators in the study. How a city scored, compared to the median city and the United States average, indicates how well that city is providing for its children.

What You Can Do

Before you put the poster up on your wall, turn it over and read about some kid-friendly initiatives across the country. Who says it's impossible to get involved? Support an innovative program or start your own! Volunteer for an after-school program. Mentor an adolescent. There are countless ways in which you can engage young people in productive activities. One person can make the difference of a lifetime.

Educational quality, access to health care, job security, a clean environment...These are universal challenges to every community. We hope that the *Report Card* will provide insight into how well communities are meeting these challenges and where improvement must occur.

Bruce Adams
President,
A Greater Washington

Bruce Adams is the founder and president of A Greater Washington, an organization working for greater regional collaboration in the National Capitol Region. He is a former two-term member and president of the Montgomery (MD) County Council. He also assisted in writing, "Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age" (available at http://civicsource.org).

The Real Test: Life in the Majors

An expert on community collaboration says: "Healthy communities are less about government structure and more about building relationships."

I'm a big baseball fan. In fact, I built a ballpark and run a team–although that's another story. And if you follow sports, you'll know this: For all of the Little League and Pony League teams, for all of the college and adult league teams, baseball is judged by the Major Leagues. The same is true in golf, tennis, and, in fact, most other sports. Wimbledon–for tennis...The Masters for golf...The bottom line is that the real tests are the Majors.

It's the same with the Major Cities in the *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*. The 31 million people who live in the 25 Major Cities represent only about 11 percent of Americans and the cities represent only a tiny fraction of our land area. Yet the importance to our country of these cities can't be overstated. If our major cities don't prosper, our suburbs and small cities will not thrive. Why? Because we look to our cities for popular culture, finance, media, leadership, and regional identity. And if our children—all of our children, including those in cities–don't have the opportunity to reach their full potential, our nation won't flourish.

This report makes clear that the most important factor in creating a kid-friendly city is to make sure that the city has healthy kids. In fact, only one city with a grade of A in the Health Category finished in the bottom half of the overall rankings and all of the cities in the top half of the rankings got an A or B in the Health Category. While that may seem obvious–it's hard to be a great place to live if many of your citizens are ill–it needs to be emphasized. Great cities have healthy residents. And there's no better way to judge the health of a population than to look at the health of its most vulnerable population: children.

While everyone calls some city or town "home," the truth is that most of us live our lives at a regional level encompassing multiple jurisdictions. We must therefore find ways to cooperate across those lines. Our economic markets function at a regional level. The environment–the air we breathe, the water we drink–doesn't see boundaries drawn hundreds of years ago. Our suburbs will not prosper without strong central cities. Our cities need the support and cooperation of their suburban neighbors.

To take an important example, too many of our Major Cities have a large percentage of unemployed and underemployed people–at a time when most suburban jurisdictions are flourishing. Why this dichotomy? Why are the people in urban areas jobless when there are jobs in the suburbs that go begging? Like many

other problems, this is just one dilemma that individual cities cannot solve by themselves. We don't have the physical and human infrastructure to make the needed connections. Most regions lack a transportation network that can get people back-and-forth to those jobs. We don't have the human services infrastructure that can provide child care and health care—essential services that allow individuals to participate in a regional economy.

From my years as an elected local official and from my study of cities and regions nationwide, I have concluded that building healthy communities is less about government structure and more about building relationships—across the boundaries of race, income, sector, politics, and geography that artificially divide and diminish our regional communities.

Citizenship is not a spectator sport. No matter where you live, no matter how well or how poorly your city did in *The Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*, there is important work to be done. The challenge—for all of us—is to provide the children in our communities with the best possible quality of life.

This is not someone else's job. It's not for the politicians, the civic leaders, or the corporations. It's *our* job, individually and collectively. As a people, we ask too much of our governments and too little of ourselves. Ultimately, we're all responsible for what our community does for our children.

Even if your city is ranked near the top, there is room for improvement and a need for continued diligence. If your city ranked near the bottom, don't despair and don't give up. Your involvement can change the lives of children and of your community. The *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* is a call for all Americans to roll up their sleeves and work to make each community a more kid-friendly place.

The idea here is not to pick out a good city to move to. The idea is to pick out some issues where your community could use some help, and get involved.

On becoming a citizen of Athens, a young person would pledge, "In all these ways we will transmit this city not only not less but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us." This is the pledge we must make. It's our obligation to our children, to our grandchildren, and to their children. The *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card* is our call to action. So, get involved. And make a difference.

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Healthy Cities and Healthy Parks–We can have both!

Peter Harnik

Peter Harnik has had a 30-year career in conservation advocacy and environmental protection, including co-founding the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Harnik has worked to create parks and trails at both the national and local levels. In 1995, he became a consultant on urban park issues to the Trust for Public Land. A 1970 graduate of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Harnik now lives with his wife in Arlington, Virginia.

Which comes first, the healthy city or the healthy park? A noted parks expert addresses the question.

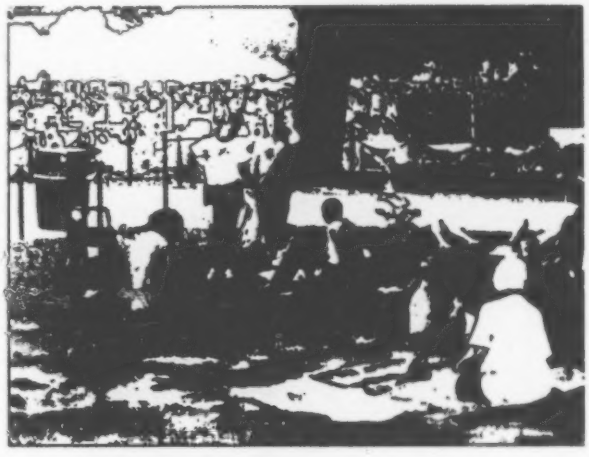
Once upon a time, America had compact cities surrounded by vast, pastoral areas of fields, streams, and forests. Today, America has enormous cities surrounded by even more colossal metropolitan regions. As a result, most city dwellers now principally experience nature—or even simple open spaces—through their city's park systems.

City parks are not as famous as national parks, and most of them are not kept up as well. They don't have geysers, or underground caverns, or snowcapped mountaintops but, acre for acre and hour for hour, city parks are the places where Americans most often enjoy open space and outdoor recreation.

Which comes first, the healthy city or the healthy park? Not long ago the question itself would have been laughable, since both cities and parks seemed in terminally failing health. Today, both are recovering and the question has real relevance. Attractive, safe, and usable parks bolster neighborhoods, but cities need a strong economic base to fix (or create) those parks in the first place. That economic base is hard to attain without middle-class taxpayers, who often will not live somewhere that lacks decent parks.

Olmstead's Ideas

More than a century ago, Frederick Law Olmstead, the great park designer and city planner known as the father of landscape architecture, found this very issue to be central to his work when he pointed out that a "park exercises a very different and much greater influence upon the progress of a city in its general structure than any other ordinary public work." In other words, parks give a city a survival advantage. Every city, after all, is in competition with every other city, not to mention every other suburb and small town. By performing all the miraculous functions that people appreciate—cleaning the air, giving cooling shade, providing space for recreation and play, offering attractive vistas, and furnishing outdoor environmental classrooms—parks improve the quality of life in a city. Each amenity, from the job market to the housing stock to cultural opportunities to even the weather, is part of the equation people use to decide where to live. A great park system can positively tip the balance.

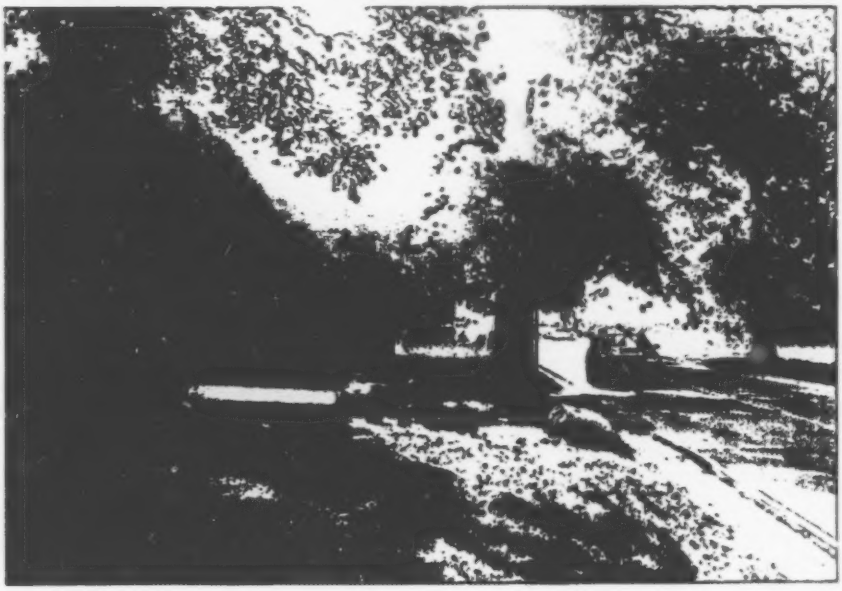


Parks and Cities

Are you interested in seeing how parks can help shape the growth of a city? Look at Chicago, Denver, and Kansas City. Intrigued by public/private partnerships? Consider Atlanta, Houston, New York, and St. Louis. Seeking excellent neighborhood-based planning? Study Minneapolis and Seattle. Turning run-down riverfronts into cultural and recreational promenades? Read about Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Converting ugly highways into

parkland and using the amenity to redevelop neighborhoods? Boston, Portland, and San Francisco. Ecologically based planning? Phoenix. Community gardens? Philadelphia. Greenways and rail trails? Baltimore, Dallas and Indianapolis. Parks as stimulators of tourism? San Diego. The list goes on and on. Cities face overarching problems yet tackle and solve them in unique and instructive ways.

Many of our biggest cities now have leadership, from either the mayor's office, the citizen sector, or the corporate community, and sometimes from all three. There is a "followership" as well. Most big cities have hundreds or thousands of volunteers, who are demonstrating their deep commitment to parks by doing physical labor, donating money or other goods, or giving their time and personal skills to beautify and improve one park or the entire system. As a result of this rejuvenation, parks in some cities are taking on the physical, spiritual, and economic roles that they have been unable to assume since before World War II.



The New Urban Vision

The new urban vision is also playing a role on the other side of the equation—far out in the suburbs. There, some residents are beginning to recognize that large-lot, autodependent living has its own set of drawbacks, and as higher-income families with a variety of lifestyle choices realize that there is more than one American dream, the attraction of "green cities" is helping to provide an alternative to urban sprawl and lack of investment in city centers.

Almost exactly 100 years ago, the United States was in the midst of the City Beautiful movement, a great emotional outpouring of enthusiasm for architectural and urban planning that shaped and reshaped many of our cities—clearing tenements, opening up broad avenues and vistas, generating huge increases in parkland, and yielding monumental signature buildings. After centuries of ever-more cramped and unhealthy conditions in urban agglomerations, the awesome economic power of cities had finally produced enough personal wealth to allow some people to dream of a life—a city life—that was both beautiful and urbane. The movement was potentially transforming, but it was nipped in the bud by growth of the automobile culture and by suburbs, which dominated most of what happened for the rest of the century.

The City Revival Movement

Now, 100 years later, we are in the midst of a new movement, a City Revival movement. As one indicator, the park departments themselves are trying to revive and revitalize what they have. For Americans, who are generally reluctant to spend money fixing old things when they would prefer to throw them out and buy new ones, that's an impressive development.

The suburbs are by no means passé, but the pendulum is swinging back. With this trend comes a renewed appreciation of the physical location, shape, and design of our big cities—and of the parks that are so instrumental to that design. To understand where each of our big cities is going, we must know where each has come from.

Some of the facts are impressive, some are bleak. Some of the stories are heartwarming, some infuriating. Taken together, the information should help all Americans—including urban planners, park professionals, park advocates, and just plain park users—to gain new insights into the workings of the devilishly complicated public spaces called urban parks.

This article is excerpted from Peter Harnik, Inside City Parks, *published in 2000 by the Urban Land Institute (www.uli.org/indexJS.htm or 1-800-321-5011).*

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A Comeback City–For Kids

Neal R. Peirce

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PHILADELPHIA. A comeback city, says Philadelphia's Mayor John Street, may purge its streets of abandoned cars. It can repossess tens of thousands of abandoned houses. It can clean up derelict lots, neighborhood after neighborhood. It may aspire, as Street's now trying, to green the empty fields and induce an historic wave of private reinvestment.

"But it's naive," says Street, "to believe that doing those physical steps will have a transforming impact on lives" of people in troubled neighborhoods.

For true transformation, he insists, poverty has to be alleviated. Latchkey kids—and Philadelphia has hundreds of thousands of them—must be provided supervision and given healthy alternative activities. Truancies (Philadelphia schools suffer some 25,000 a day) have to be nipped—perhaps by enlisting volunteer callers from faith-based institutions. Schools must be made full-service community centers for neighborhoods.

The city, in short, must effect a radical system change—transforming itself from a sometimes fearful, crime-plagued place to one that's supportive of, welcoming to, nurturing of children, even from poor families. It's a stunning challenge that lots of cities are discussing. What sets Philadelphia apart is that it's moving to embrace serious public accountability, not just for moneys poured into schools and children's programs, but in actual results—more first-graders ready to learn, fewer dropouts, long-term reductions in substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile arrests.

Central to the effort is Naomi Post, 47, executive director of "Philadelphia Safe and Sound," a program to curb crime and enhance children's welfare funded by the Urban Health Initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Post is Mayor Street's wife. But her qualifications shine through in five minutes' conversation. An attorney and seasoned children's advocate, she was selected through a national search, before Street's election. "She has street smarts, political skill. She's tough and has made our effort in Philadelphia a star performer," says former Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, director of the national Urban Health Initiative.

And so Post has access to the mayor? Referring to companion programs in Detroit, Baltimore, Richmond and Oakland, Royer quips, "I'd ask all our executive directors to try to marry the mayor."

So what's Post's success formula? First, a major media campaign was launched. Its theme, "Be an adult; show kids the way," was intended to portray Philadelphia's children positively and hopefully and build public willingness to invest in their future.

Second, a "Philadelphia Childrens' Report Card" was released. It rated kids' welfare on 25 major indicators ranging from healthy births and childcare levels to incidents of abuse, school readiness, dropout rates, to college exam scores. The report's promised annually, so the city can truly "keep score."

Third came a Children's Budget—totaling what's now being spent on Philadelphia children, and how. The total: $3.8 billion a year. But a huge chunk is going for the schools and juvenile justice and a scandalously few percentage points on childcare, youth development and after-school programs that can reduce delinquency and give a big boost to kids' life prospects.

Safe and Sound's goal is nothing less than changing how the entire Philadelphia community—private charities on the one hand, but also what Post calls "the big gorilla"—government itself—change their funding habits for superior long-term investments, and results.

So what are the steps here?

As Royer explains it, people plotting a better future for kids need first to understand the basic political relationships, agency-to-agency—"How the plumbing in the basement of state House, county government, city hall really works." Then they need a hard-headed policy analysis—what really must be changed for more positive results. And finally a fiscal policy to get money flowing to kids' futures where it counts—for example more early prevention efforts and less after-the-delinquency punishment.

It adds up to a kind of *realpolitik* to benefit a population our policymakers rarely serve smartly—the next generation.

What's fascinating about Philadelphia, beyond the Streets' personal relationship, is how the Urban Health Initiative initially selected Philadelphia to test if a close relationship with government could improve children's lot in a truly massive, politically volatile big city.

But Post, the program's second director, found that with government department heads in charge, it was harder to push for public scrutiny and accountability.

So Philadelphia Safe and Sound, at her urging, switched to an independent board including such Philadelphia heavies as Janet Haas, president of the William Penn Foundation, and David Cohen, chief of staff and superstar of the recent Edward Rendell administration.

Obviously, the tie to the city administration remains very close. But the prestigious independent board, says Post, is intended to protect the effort when the Street administration ends.

Not often are children beneficiaries of such careful political maneuvering. It's a daring effort to focus public policy—for a change—on a community's future.

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Indicators and Data

Definitions, Sources, and Rationales

This section details where we obtained indicators, what the indicators mean, and why they are important to this study.

Population Indicators

Data on *total population* and *percent of population under 18 years of age* was obtained from the 2000 U.S. Census survey. Percent population change is the difference between the city's 1998 population and its 2000 population. Total population for 1998 was obtained from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program, which produces estimates for the years following the last decennial estimate. The decennial census counts are updated using existing data series such as births, deaths, federal tax returns, Medicare enrollment, and immigration.

Too often, a city's rapid population growth is not matched by equal growth in hospitals, schools, recreational areas, and other vital service sectors. Both rapid population growth and rapid population decline were considered to be negative characteristics, because the stability of a community is essential for meeting the needs of its residents, especially children.

Health Indicators

Data on *percent low birthweight births, percent births to teens,* and *infant mortality rate* was obtained from the Division of Vital Statistics at the National Center for Health Statistics. The data is from 1998 and is reported by mother's residence, not place of birth.

Where city-level data was unavailable for some small cities, we used county-level data. Only state-level data was available for Fargo, Laredo, Huntington, Casper, and Cheyenne.

Low birthweight infants (infants born weighing less than 2,500 grams, or about 5.5 pounds) are at higher risk of death or long-term illness and disability than are infants of normal birthweight. Low birthweight babies are more than 20 times more likely to die during the first year of life than normal birthweight infants.

Percent births to teens reflects the number of live births to women under 20 years of age divided by the total number of live births in a city. Babies born to teen mothers are at a higher risk of low birthweight and infant mortality compared with babies born to older mothers. They are more likely to grow up in homes that have lower levels of emotional support, and they are less likely to earn high school diplomas. Teen motherhood is often accompanied by poverty, diminishing opportunities for both mother and child.

Infant mortality is defined as the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. The infant mortality rate is an important measure of the well-being of infants, children, and pregnant women because it reflects maternal health, quality of access to medical care, and socioeconomic conditions. It captures the intrinsic link between the health of a mother and that of her child.

Health Improvement Grade

The *Health Improvement Grade* was based on changes in three indicators of health between 1990 and 1998 – percent births to teens, percent low birthweight births, and infant mortality rate. Where city-level data was unavailable in 1990, but was available in 1998, we only used county or state data to compute the change in health over those eight years.

Although we did not include this category in the cities' final grades and ranks, it is an important indication of both positive and negative changes taking place. Consider this an "effort" grade, much like the "effort" grades given to our students in their report cards.

Number of Title X-funded clinics was obtained from the 2001/2002 Directory of the Office of Population Affairs. In the case of Florida and Hawaii, the data was obtained directly from the states' family planning divisions. Title X clinics play a crucial role in preventing unintended pregnancies, including adolescent pregnancies. These services are the principal source of health care for many, particularly the uninsured. Nearly 85 percent of the population served by Title X clinics is from low-income households, 30 percent is less than 20 years of age, and 60 percent is less than 25 years of age.

Education Indicators

Please Note: Because the U.S. Census Bureau hasn't yet released city-level education data, we used state-level information rather than the more outdated 1990 city-level Census data.

Average SAT scores, average elementary class size, and *average secondary class size* data was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics. SAT scores are from 1999-2000. The highest possible score is a 1600. Class size data is from 1993-94, which was published last year by the NCES.

Average ACT scores were obtained for 2000 by ACT, Inc. The highest possible score is 36. We used both ACT and SAT scores because of the varying proportions of students in each state taking these two tests.

Both the SAT and the ACT are used primarily to assess how students will perform during the first year of college. A large number of colleges require students to report either the ACT or the SAT on admission applications.

The National Center for Education Statistics in a May 2000 report concluded that smaller class sizes—more than any other factor—determine higher student achievement. The study analyzed 18 variables, including school size, class size, cohesion of faculty, teacher qualifications, and teacher perceptions of school climate.

Public Safety

Data on *violent crime per 1000 people* and *property crime per 1000 people* was obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation log of crimes reported in 1999. Violent crime is defined as murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crime is defined as burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Arson was excluded from property crime data due to the unavailability of data for many cities. The data has not been adjusted for under-reporting, which may affect comparability between geographic areas or over time.

According to the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), children are at much greater risk of being victims of crime than they are of being perpetrators. Juveniles make up a total of 12 percent of all crime victims, as reported to the police. They are 71 percent of the victims of all sex crimes and 38 percent of all kidnaping. One out of every 18 victims of violent crime, and one of every 3 victims of sexual assault, is under age 12.

Economic Indicators

Unemployment rate is the percent of the civilian labor force that had no employment during the reference week, despite being available for work (except for temporary illness) and making specific efforts to find employment some time during the four-week period ending with the reference week. Data is from 1998 and is reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Lack of family income is a serious threat to children's health and well-being because it exposes children to poverty. Parents who suffer from the emotional stress of thwarted attempts to provide for their family's basic needs are less effective in supporting, guiding, and nurturing their children. Since most

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parents obtain health insurance for themselves and their children through their employers, lack of employment can mean no health care. According to the Children's Defense Fund, children's risks multiply when families cannot afford learning materials, good quality child-care, decent, stable housing, or the hope of living outside a crime-ridden neighborhood.

For the Major cities, we were able to obtain data on the *percent of homes that are affordable for a median income family* from the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB). Data is from the fourth quarter of 2000.

Without decent, affordable housing, working-class families face difficulties in realizing their dreams. The stability that comes with homeownership is important for child development and achievement. According to NAHB, "Homeownership is the cornerstone of family security, stability and prosperity. It strengthens the nation's communities, encourages civic responsibility and provides a solid foundation from which Americans can work to support their families, enhance their communities and achieve their personal goals."

Environmental Indicators

The *number of bad air days* was obtained from the *1998 National Air Quality and Emissions Trends Report*, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA reports the number of days with Air Quality Index (AQI) values greater than 100 for the nation's 94 largest metropolitan areas. An AQI value over 100 is considered unhealthy for sensitive groups.

The AQI is a recent revision of the older Pollution Standards Index (PSI). Because the new index values are not readily available for all metropolitan areas, data for the Independent cities came from AIRData, an EPA on-line database. Since data for the Independent cities is based on the older PSI, it cannot be directly compared to data for the Major and Component cities.

While five criteria pollutants can contribute to AQI, the index primarily reflects ozone levels. Our report looks specifically at "bad air days" resulting from ozone. According to the EPA, children and people with asthma are most at risk from ozone "bad air days." Exposure to ozone for several hours at relatively low concentrations has been found to significantly reduce lung function. Children are especially at risk because they spend a lot of time outdoors.

Community Life Indicators

Park acreage per 1000 persons for the 25 Major cities came from Peter Harnik's book *Inside City Parks* (Urban Land Institute, 2000). Data for all other cities was obtained by contacting each city's mayor and local department of parks and recreation. Parks data is "self-reported" and is an estimate of all park space located within the city's boundary, regardless of the managing agency. In many cases, park space includes undeveloped land, sports fields, natural reserves, lakes and reservoirs, and trails.

Library circulation per child and *children's program attendance counts* were obtained from the American Library Association's *2000 Statistical Report*. Where data was not available, we contacted the city and/or city library directly. For all 3 indicators, data was imputed in select cases where we were unable to gather data from city officials.

We also reported, but did not include in the ranking, the number of museums geared specifically to children and/or youth. This data was provided by the Association of Youth Museums.

Recreational facilities provide children with infinite social, health, and cultural benefits. Public parks, recreation facilities and creative programs offer alternatives proven to help prevent high-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system.

Major Cities

More than 31 million people live in the 25 cities in the Major Cities category. While this is only about 11 percent of the total population, it is an amazingly important 11 percent. A disproportionate share of our news, ideas, governance, influence, wealth, and popular culture comes from these cities. The average Major City has a population of about 1.24 million people (about the size of San Diego), including about 300,000 children under the age of 18. The Major Cities range in size from more than 8 million in New York to just over 300,000 in Tampa. Detroit has the highest proportion of children (31%), and San Francisco has the lowest (14.5%).

We define a Major City as the main city in an MSA (metropolitan statistical area) that contains at least 2 million people. Thus, places like St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Miami, with city populations of less than 400,000, are included as major cities while large cities like Jacksonville, Indianapolis, and San Antonio are not. A major city is determined by the population of the metro area–not the size of the core city.

Major Cities—Overall Ranking

Rank	City Name	State	Grade	Rank	City Name	State	Grade
1	Portland	OR	A+	14	Saint Louis	MO	B
2	Seattle	WA	A+	15	Cleveland	OH	B
3	Minneapolis	MN	A	16	Chicago	IL	B
4	New York	NY	A	17	Philadelphia	PA	B
5	San Francisco	CA	A-	18	Phoenix	AZ	C+
6	Boston	MA	A-	19	Los Angeles	CA	C
7	Denver	CO	A-	20	Miami	FL	C
8	Fort Worth	TX	B+	21	Tampa	FL	C
9	Houston	TX	B+	22	Washington	DC	C
10	San Diego	CA	B+	23	Baltimore	MD	C-
11	San Jose	CA	B	24	Detroit	MI	C-
12	Dallas	TX	B	25	Atlanta	GA	C-
13	Pittsburgh	PA	B				

Honor Roll—Major Cities

Health Improvement

City	State
1. Atlanta	GA
2. Washington	DC
3. Pittsburgh	PA

Environment

City	State
1. San Francisco	CA
2. Minneapolis	MN
3. Portland	OR (Tie)
3. Seattle	WA (Tie)

Public Safety

City	State
1. San Jose	CA
2. San Diego	CA
3. Denver	CO

Population

City	State
1. San Diego	CA
2. Baltimore	MD
3. Miami	FL

Health

City	State
1. San Francisco	CA
2. Portland	OR
3. San Jose	CA

Community Life

City	State
1. Portland	OR
2. Denver	CO
3. San Francisco	CA

Economics

City	State
1. Minneapolis	MN
2. Tampa	FL
3. Phoenix	AZ

Note: No Honor Roll for Education category due to lack of city-level data.

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Independent Cities

Independent Cities are cities with populations of 100,000 or greater, and are the main cities of MSAs of less than 2 million people. Because no cities in Delaware, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming, or West Virginia fit this definition, we ranked the largest city in the state. West Virginia and Wyoming each have two cities of nearly identical size, so we included both of them. We did not drop any cities that were in the 1999 report even if their 2000 population dipped slightly below 100,000.

There are 140 Independent Cities with an average size of 229,000—about the size of Baton Rouge, LA. Laredo, TX has the highest proportion of children (35.5%) and Burlington, VT has the lowest (16.2%).

Rank	City	State	Grade
1	Burlington	VT	A+
2	Cedar Rapids	IA	A+
3	Sioux Falls	SD	A+
4	Madison	WI	A+
5	Fargo	ND	A+
6	Green Bay	WI	A+
7	Portland	ME	A+
8	Lincoln	NE	A+
9	Manchester	NH	A+
10	Stamford	CT	A+
11	Des Moines	IA	A+
12	Bellevue	WA	A+
13	Ann Arbor	MI	A+
14	Fort Collins	CO	A+
15	Omaha	NE	A+
16	Indianapolis	IN	A
17	Billings	MT	A
18	Austin	TX	A
19	Boise City	ID	A
20	Casper	WY	A
21	Anchorage	AK	A
22	Wichita	KS	A
23	Provo	UT	A
24	Cheyenne	WY	A
25	Columbus	OH	A
26	Tulsa	OK	A
27	Eugene	OR	A
28	Salem	OR	A-
29	Saint Paul	MN	A-
30	Springfield	MO	A-
31	Topeka	KS	A-
32	Honolulu	HI	A-
33	Huntington	WV	A-
34	Peoria	IL	A-
35	Louisville	KY	A-
36	Oklahoma City	OK	A-
37	Evansville	IN	A-
38	Lowell	MA	A-
39	Lexington-Fayette	KY	B+
40	Arlington	TX	B+
41	Waterbury	CT	B+
42	Virginia Beach	VA	B+
43	Toledo	OH	B+
44	Colorado Springs	CO	B+
45	Raleigh	NC	B+
46	Abilene	TX	B+
47	Fort Wayne	IN	B+
48	Tucson	AZ	B+
49	Albany	NY	B+
50	Erie	PA	B+
51	Spokane	WA	B+
52	Worcester	MA	B+
53	Clearwater	FL	B+
54	Huntsville	AL	B+
55	Lansing	MI	B+
56	Pueblo	CO	B
57	Mesa	AZ	B
58	San Antonio	TX	B
59	Springfield	IL	B
60	Amarillo	TX	B
61	Milwaukee	WI	B
62	Allentown	PA	B
63	Knoxville	TN	B
64	Akron	OH	B
65	Kansas City	MO	B
66	El Paso	TX	B
67	Vancouver	WA	B
68	Cincinnati	OH	B
69	Reno	NV	B
70	Greensboro	NC	B
71	Albuquerque	NM	B
72	Rockford	IL	B
73	Newport News	VA	B
74	Salt Lake City	UT	B
75	Little Rock	AR	B
76	Charleston	WV	B
77	South Bend	IN	B
78	Laredo	TX	B
79	Lafayette	LA	B
80	Syracuse	NY	B
81	Tacoma	WA	B
82	Santa Rosa	CA	B
83	Buffalo	NY	B
84	Ventura	CA	B
85	Charlotte	NC	B-
86	Wichita Falls	TX	B-
87	New Haven	CT	B-
88	Corpus Christi	TX	B-
89	Brownsville	TX	B-
90	Dayton	OH	B-
91	Nashville-Davidson	TN	B-
92	McAllen	TX	B-
93	Columbia	SC	B-
94	Grand Rapids	MI	B-
95	Lubbock	TX	B-
96	Springfield	MA	B-
97	Las Vegas	NV	B-
98	Rochester	NY	B-
99	Waco	TX	C+
100	Providence	RI	C+
101	Montgomery	AL	C+
102	Mobile	AL	C+
103	Bridgeport	CT	C+
104	Birmingham	AL	C+
105	Fayetteville	NC	C+
106	Norfolk	VA	C+
107	Jacksonville	FL	C+
108	New Orleans	LA	C+
109	Wilmington	DE	C
110	Baton Rouge	LA	C
111	Vallejo	CA	C
112	Durham	NC	C
113	Richmond	VA	C
114	Sacramento	CA	C
115	Savannah	GA	C
116	Tallahassee	FL	C
117	Hartford	CT	C
118	Modesto	CA	C
119	Jersey City	NJ	C
120	Fort Lauderdale	FL	C
121	Beaumont	TX	C
122	Shreveport	LA	C
123	Oakland	CA	C
124	Columbus	GA	C
125	Salinas	CA	C
126	Riverside	CA	C
127	Winston-Salem	NC	C-
128	Memphis	TN	C-
129	Gary	IN	C-
130	Orlando	FL	C-
131	Chattanooga	TN	C-
132	Saint Petersburg	FL	C-
133	Bakersfield	CA	C-
134	Jackson	MS	C-
135	Stockton	CA	C-
136	Newark	NJ	C-
137	Macon	GA	C-
138	Fresno	CA	C-
139	Flint	MI	C-
140	San Bernardino	CA	C-

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Independent Cities

Population

	City	State
1.	Kansas City	MO
2.	Savannah	GA
3.	New Haven	CT
4.	McAllen	TX
5.	Laredo	TX
6.	Toledo	OH
7.	Louisville	KY
8.	San Bernardino	CA
9.	Madison	WI
10.	Akron	OH

Health

	City	State
1.	Honolulu	HI
2.	Manchester	NH
3.	Ann Arbor	MI
4.	Bellevue	WA
5.	Provo	UT
6.	El Paso	TX
7.	Cedar Rapids	IA
8.	Portland	OR
9.	Burlington	VT
10.	Austin	TX

Public Safety

	City	State
1.	Fargo	ND
2.	Provo	UT
3.	Stamford	CT
4.	Ventura	CA
5.	Sioux Falls	SD
6.	Manchester	NH
7.	Ann Arbor	MI
8.	Virginia Beach	VA
9.	Santa Rosa	CA
10.	Bellevue	WA

Health Improvement

	City	State
1.	Cedar Rapids	IA
2.	Charlotte	NC
3.	New Orleans	LA
4.	Raleigh	NC
5.	Louisville	KY
6.	Syracuse	NY
7.	Salem	OR
8.	Oakland	CA
9.	Savannah	GA
10.	Dayton	OH

Environment

63 cities had 0 bad air days

Community Life

	City	State
1.	Columbus	OH
2.	Clearwater	FL
3.	Burlington	VT
4.	Peoria	IL
5.	Green Bay	WI
6.	Fort Collins	CO
7.	Portland	OR
8.	Allentown	PA
9.	Charlotte	NC
10.	Greensboro	NC

Economics

	City	State
1.	Ann Arbor	MI (Tie)
1.	Fargo	ND (Tie)
1.	Madison	WI (Tie)
4.	Sioux Falls	SD
5.	Cedar Rapids	IA
6.	Lexington-Fayette	KY
7.	Bellevue	WA
8.	Mesa	AZ
9.	Durham	NC (Tie)
9.	Lincoln	NE (Tie)

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Component Cities

They are called "suburbs," "edge cities," "outer cities," "exurbs," or just "The 'burbs." But the U.S. Census Bureau calls them "Component Cities." These are communities that are part of a larger MSA, but are not the main cities in that MSA. Component cities are incorporated areas of greater than 100,000 within the MSA of another city. In general, they depend on the nearby major city for public transportation, jobs, radio and television stations, daily newspapers, cultural activities, political leadership, and regional identity.

There are 74 Component Cities with an average population of 155,000—about the size of Santa Clarita, CA. Sandy, UT is included in the study because, when we started the study, it had a 2000 population estimate greater than 100,000. Palmdale, CA has the highest proportion of children (38%) and Berkeley, CA has the lowest (14%).

Rank	City	State	Grade
1	Overland Park	KS	A+
2	Livonia	MI	A+
3	Naperville	IL	A+
4	Scottsdale	AZ	A+
5	Plano	TX	A+
6	Independence	MO	A+
7	Aurora	IL	A+
8	Thousand Oaks	CA	A+
9	Sterling Heights	MI	A+
10	Lakewood	CO	A
11	Arlington	VA	A
12	Sunnyvale	CA	A
13	Santa Clara	CA	A-
14	Alexandria	VA	A-
15	Carrollton	TX	A-
16	Warren	MI	A-
17	Yonkers	NY	A-
18	Huntington Beach	CA	A-
19	Irvine	CA	A-
20	Fremont	CA	A-
21	Pasadena	CA	A-
22	Chesapeake	VA	A-
23	Costa Mesa	CA	B+
24	Berkeley	CA	B+
25	Sandy	UT	B+

Rank	City	State	Grade
26	Irving	TX	B+
27	Fullerton	CA	B
28	Torrance	CA	B
29	Hampton	VA	B
30	Orange	CA	B
31	West Valley City	UT	B
32	Garland	TX	B
33	Aurora	CO	B
34	Anaheim	CA	B
35	Simi Valley	CA	B
36	Oceanside	CA	B
37	Henderson	NV	B
38	Mesquite	TX	B
39	Garden Grove	CA	B
40	Concord	CA	B
41	Chandler	AZ	B
42	Glendale	AZ	B
43	Tempe	AZ	B
44	Grand Prairie	TX	B-
45	Santa Ana	CA	B-
46	Kansas City	KS	B-
47	Coral Springs	FL	B-
48	Pasadena	TX	B-
49	Chula Vista	CA	B-
50	Hayward	CA	B-

Rank	City	State	Grade
51	Glendale	CA	B-
52	Escondido	CA	B-
53	West Covina	CA	C+
54	Elizabeth	NJ	C+
55	Lancaster	CA	C+
56	Long Beach	CA	C+
57	Pembroke Pines	FL	C+
58	Paterson	NJ	C+
59	Norwalk	CA	C+
60	El Monte	CA	C+
61	Hollywood	FL	C
62	North Las Vegas	NV	C
63	Hialeah	FL	C
64	Santa Clarita	CA	C
65	Rancho Cucamonga	CA	C
66	Oxnard	CA	C
67	Corona	CA	C-
68	Ontario	CA	C-
69	Inglewood	CA	C-
70	Pomona	CA	C-
71	Palmdale	CA	C-
72	Portsmouth	VA	C-
73	Fontana	CA	C-
74	Moreno Valley	CA	C-

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Component Cities

Environment

	City	State
1.	Paterson	NJ
2.	Coral Springs	FL
3.	Hollywood	FL
4.	Pembroke Pines	FL
5.	Henderson	NV
6.	North Las Vegas	NV
7.	Concord	CA
8.	Santa Clara	CA
9.	Sunnyvale	CA
10.	Eight cities tied for 10th place.	

Population

	City	State
1.	Sterling Heights	MI
2.	Thousand Oaks	CA
3.	Lancaster	CA
4.	Chesapeake	VA
5.	Torrance	CA
6.	Fremont	CA
7.	Pasadena	CA
8.	Paterson	NJ
9.	Livonia	MI
10.	Simi Valley	CA

Community Life

	City	State
1.	Pasadena	CA
2.	Thousand Oaks	CA
3.	Scottsdale	AZ
4.	Berkeley	CA
5.	Naperville	IL
6.	Santa Clara	CA
7.	Independence	MO
8.	Plano	TX
9.	Arlington	VA
10.	Overland Park	KS

Public Safety

	City	State
1.	Naperville	IL
2.	Thousand Oaks	CA
3.	Simi Valley	CA
4.	Sunnyvale	CA
5.	Santa Clarita	CA
6.	Irvine	CA
7.	Huntington Beach	CA
8.	Glendale	CA
9.	Fremont	CA
10.	Corona	CA

Economics

	City	State
1.	Livonia	MI
2.	Plano	TX
3.	Scottsdale	AZ
4.	Chandler	AZ (Tie)
4.	Irvine	CA (Tie)
4.	Carrollton	TX (Tie)
7.	Huntington Beach	CA (Tie)
7.	Alexandria	VA (Tie)
7.	Arlington	VA (Tie)
7.	Tempe	AZ (Tie)

Health Improvement

	City	State
1.	Livonia	MI
2.	Lakewood	CO
3.	Huntington Beach	CA
4.	Berkeley	CA
5.	Fullerton	CA
6.	Kansas City	KS
7.	Torrance	CA
8.	Santa Ana	CA
9.	Fremont	CA
10.	Oxnard	CA

Health

	City	State
1.	Livonia	MI
2.	Fremont	CA
3.	Sunnyvale	CA
4.	Irvine	CA
5.	Oceanside	CA
6.	Costa Mesa	CA
7.	Huntington Beach	CA
8.	Plano	TX
9.	Warren	MI
10.	Berkeley	CA

Kid-Friendly Cities Benefit the Planet, Too!

Molly O'Meara Sheehan
Worldwatch

Molly O'Meara Sheehan is a researcher at the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, DC, where she studies the role of cities and information technology in solving environmental problems. She is a contributing author to the Institute's annual publications, State of the World *and* Vital Signs, *and regularly writes for* World Watch *magazine.*

A distinguished environmental researcher provides insight into what makes a city kid-friendly.

By fostering safe streets for pedestrians and cyclists and investing in public transportation, cities can not only boost their attractiveness to children but also lighten their burden on the planet.

Portland's Positives

Portland, the top city for children in this year's *Kid-Friendly Cities Report Card*, enjoys good air quality in part because it has invested in buses, bicycle paths, and light rail lines that offer people greater mobility with less pollution. By reducing the need for driving, Portland also emits less climate-altering carbon emissions per person from transportation than other major U.S. cities. More car-reliant cities such as Atlanta, this year's lowest-ranking city for kids, not only suffer worse air quality but also contribute disproportionately to global climate change. Worldwide, road transportation is the fastest-growing source of the carbon emissions that warm the atmosphere.

Over the past several decades, spurred by Oregon laws requiring regional transportation and land use planning, Portland has adopted both building and transportation policies that make streets welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists. To avoid expanses of alienating blank walls, the city requires that ground-floor windows and public art be incorporated into new public buildings. The city's transportation department and police department have teamed up in a "traffic-calming" program to deter speeding on city streets, especially those near schools. The city now has 240 kilometers of bikeways, and requires bicycle parking to accompany new construction.

The Portland area is now trying to apply the lessons learned in revitalizing its downtown to revamping its suburbs. The latest plan is to channel the bulk of future growth to nine regional centers that are to be interconnected by light rail. Up to 85 percent of new development is to take place no farther than a five-minute walk from a transit stop. The first segment of the light rail network, opened in 1990, runs east from downtown Portland; the second line, opened in 1998, traces the city's western corridor. A lane of light rail can move 16 times more people per hour than a lane of highway can. Without the west-side rail link, planners estimate that they would have needed eight new parking garages and two extra lanes on major highways.

The Other Side

In contrast, the state of Georgia has historically devoted the bulk of transportation resources to highways, particularly in Atlanta's northern suburbs, while investing little in Atlanta's public transportation. With many miles of highway and few real alternatives to the private car, Atlanta is one of the most dangerous U.S. cities for walking, according to the Surface Transportation Policy Project, which found that some 185 pedestrians were killed there in 1997 and 1998.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, according to researcher Arthur Nelson, metropolitan Portland and Atlanta have seen comparable growth in population, but Portland has benefitted from slower growth in vehicle traffic, reduced commuting time, cuts in air pollution and fuel use, and an increase in neighborhood quality. Recently, concerns in Atlanta about increased air pollution and decreased quality of life have allowed Georgia's governor to move more in the direction of Oregon, creating a powerful new regional agency to coordinate transportation and land use in the Atlanta area.

Adapted from Worldwatch Paper 156, "City Limits: Putting the Brakes on Sprawl," available from Worldwatch (1-800-555-2028).

Methodology

How We Assigned Grades and Ranks

by Radhika Sarin

How did Miami get an A in Population while Minneapolis got a C? We scored each indicator within a category using the same basic formula. In the case of the Population category, there was only one indicator to score – population change. Other categories included multiple indicators, so each indicator was scored and the sum of the indicators' scores was graded.

The formula that was used to score each indicator is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{(City X Value – Lowest City Value)}}{\text{(Range of Values)}} = \text{City X Score}$$

where

City X Value = indicator value of city being scored
Lowest City Value = lowest indicator value in the data set
Range of Values = difference between the highest and lowest indicator values in the data set
Score = The higher the number, the better

Note: This formula is used when high values are "positive" while low values are "negative" (e.g. the number of Title X-funded clinics). When high values are "negative" (e.g. infant mortality rates), the formula used to score indicator values is as follows:

$$1 - \frac{\text{(City X Value – Lowest City Value)}}{\text{(Range of Values)}} = \text{City X Score}$$

We applied this formula to every city. Then, we added up indicator scores within a category for each city. For example, the Public Safety category score was the sum of the scores of *violent crimes per 1000 persons* and *property crimes per 1000 persons*. This total score was given a grade using a normal distribution curve.

How We Did The Scores

Cities' final ranks are based on their total scores. The city with the highest score ranked first, the city with the second highest score ranked second, and so on. All scoring and grading was done separately for the three city groups (Major, Independent, and Component).

Example: In order to determine the percent births to teens score for Greensboro, North Carolina (Independent city with 11.1% births to teens), the first step is to find the Independent city with the lowest value—this is Ann Arbor, Michigan, at 4.4%. Next, find the Independent city with the highest value—this is Gary, Indiana, at 25.1%. Finally, use the following formula to determine Greensboro's score:

$$1 - \frac{(11.1 - 4.4)}{(25.1 - 4.4)} = 0.67$$

This indicates that Greensboro scored slightly better than the average (0.50) for all of the Independent cities that we studied. In fact, the average city value for births to teens is 15%, and Greensboro's value of 11.1% is, indeed, lower than this value, giving it a higher than average score. Ann Arbor gets the highest possible score of 1, while Gary gets the lowest possible score of 0.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical Analysis
Statistical Analysis

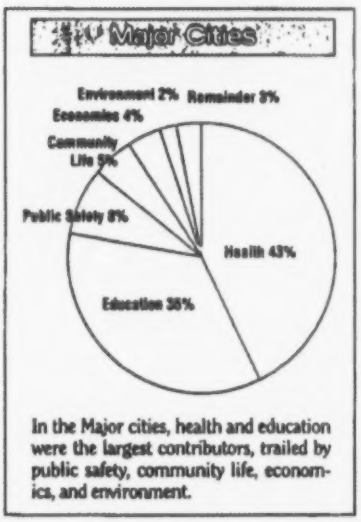
Analysis Part I: Variance in Final Rank Explained by Data Categories

A stepwise multiple linear regression procedure was used to assess the relative contribution of each data category (Population, Health, Education, etc.) to variability in the final rank of cities.

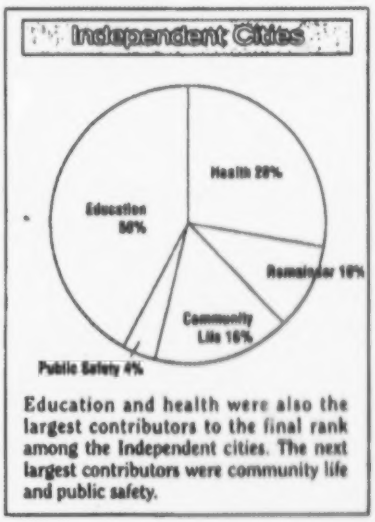
More specifically, we were interested in each coefficient of partial determination, which represents the proportion of the variability in the dependent variable (final city rank) explained by an independent variable (a data category rank) after all other independent variables have explained as much of the variability as possible.

The following pie charts display the results of the analysis. Each group of cities was analyzed separately.

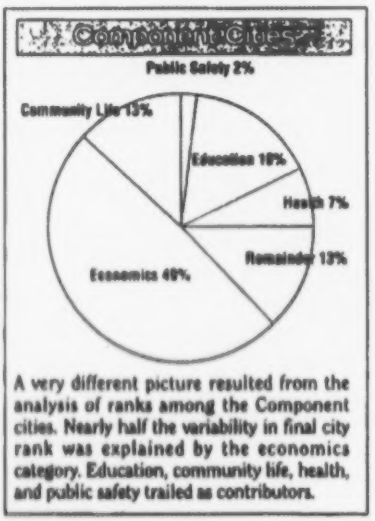
Note: Only those categories that explained at least 2% of the remaining variability were retained.



In the Major cities, health and education were the largest contributors, trailed by public safety, community life, economics, and environment.



Education and health were also the largest contributors to the final rank among the Independent cities. The next largest contributors were community life and public safety.



A very different picture resulted from the analysis of ranks among the Component cities. Nearly half the variability in final city rank was explained by the economics category. Education, community life, health, and public safety trailed as contributors.

Compiled with assistance from Rebecca Y. Stallings. Ms. Stallings holds a Master of Health Science degree in Biostatistics from Johns Hopkins University, where she has worked on dozens of research studies. She is a freelance consultant and Biostatistics instructor at Morgan State University.

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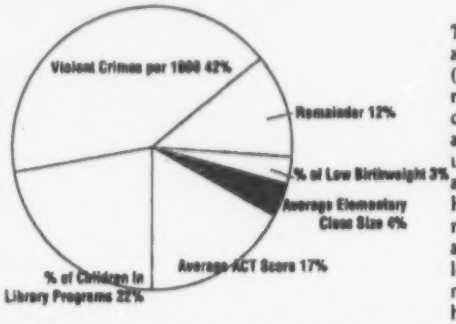
Analysis Part II: Variance in Final Score Explained by Independent Indicators

During the second phase of analysis, we examined the importance of the individual indicators (unemployment rate, for example) in explaining the variability in final city scores.

We first conducted an exploratory data analysis using raw data for each indicator variable, noting cases of extreme outliers and other evidence of non-normality. In some instances, a normal log transformation corrected marked skewness.

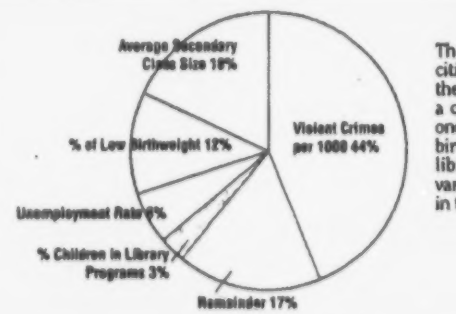
Data for the four education indicators was only available at the state-level. Multiple cities within one state thus shared the same value for each of these indicators. This presents a statistical dilemma because observations from the same state are perfectly correlated with one another with respect to education variables. Therefore, we utilized two different regression procedures to arrive at our final models. First, we fit a separate stepwise linear model regressing final city score on the set of indicator variables comprising one category (Health, for example). All remaining statistically significant variables in these separate models were combined into a single stepwise model to ascertain which variables would remain significant.

The same set of variables tested in this combined variable stepwise procedure were also tested using a second regression procedure which allowed us to fit a random components model in which the perfect correlation of the education variables is acknowledged. We were thus able to validate the statistical significance of those variables that remained after running the combined variable stepwise models.


Violent Crimes per 1000 42%
Remainder 12%
% of Low Birthweight 3%
Average Elementary Class Size 4%
Average ACT Score 17%
% of Children in Library Programs 22%

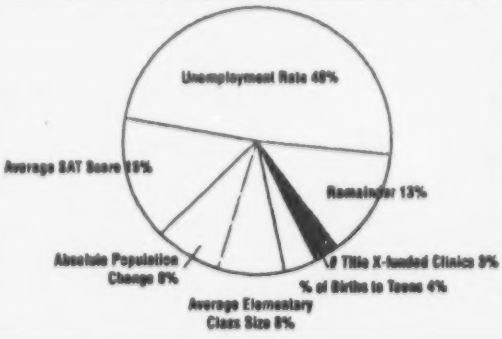
Major Cities

The largest contributor to the final score among the Major cities was violent crime (violent crimes per 1,000 people). The next two largest contributors were children's library program attendance and average ACT score. The final two contributors were average elementary class size and percent low birthweight births. However, the random components model revealed that the variance estimates for average elementary class size and percent low birthweight births were underestimated in the final stepwise model, and are hence not statistically significant.


Average Secondary Class Size 18%
% of Low Birthweight 12%
Violent Crimes per 1000 44%
Unemployment Rate 6%
% Children in Library Programs 3%
Remainder 17%

Independent Cities

The final stepwise model for Independent cities revealed that violent crime was again the largest contributor to the final score of a city. This was followed by average secondary class size, percent low birthweight births, unemployment rate, and children's library program attendance. All of these variables remained statistically significant in the random components model.


Unemployment Rate 48%
Average SAT Score 19%
Remainder 13%
Absolute Population Change 8%
Title X-funded Clinics 5%
% of Births to Teens 4%
Average Elementary Class Size 8%

Component Cities

Unemployment rate was, by far, the largest contributor in the final scores of Component cities. Average SAT score, population change, and average elementary class size trailed as contributors. The final two contributors were the percent births to teens and the number of Title X-funded clinics. All of these variables remained statistically significant in the random components model.

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Statistical Analysis Statistical Analysis Statistical Analysis Statistical Analysis

Analysis Part III: Final Rank vs. Health Improvement in the Major Cities

We were also interested in looking at the relationship between a city's health improvement rank and its final rank. Data from the Major cities was graphed (see below), with a city's health improvement rank on the X axis and its final rank on the Y axis. The 45 degree line represents a one-to-one correlation between the two ranks.

Among the Major cities, only two cities have the same health improvement rank and final rank: Chicago at rank 16 and Miami at rank 20. All cities that are located above the 45 degree line (Atlanta, Washington, DC, Detroit, Tampa, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland) have a health improvement rank that is higher than their final rank. In other words, despite finishing with a low overall rank, they show tremendous improvements over the last eight years relative to the other cities in the study. The 17 cities located below the 45 degree line have a health improvement rank that is lower than their final rank.

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For guidelines and more information, write to: A Word from Our Planet Contest, PopEd@zpg.org Teacher's PET Project, 1400 16th St., NW, #320, Washington, DC 20036

And be sure to visit www.awordfromourplanet.org soon for all contest details and to submit your entry on-line!

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